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harsh police measures, the more did the Socialist party wax. Of the noble and gallant soldier Caprivi, who obeyed his Emperor by succeeding Bismarck as prime minister, he says, "but now I see he is only a talker!"

The book is an important contribution to history. It reveals to us the true Bismarck; it explains to some extent why nearly all the domestic and foreign measures connected with his name have been failures after the moment of consolidating the Empire. The truth is here suggested, if not fully spread forth: that Bismarck was not a great character, that he was not built on broad, generous lines, that he could not lift himself above the poisonous mists of personal likes and dislikes. This truth Mr. Whitman's book admirably if unwittingly expresses; and it is the more valuable by reason of the fact that it is intended for those who hold Bismarck so high that nothing from his lips can prove uninteresting.

POULTNEY BIGELOW.

Queen Victoria — a Biography. By SIDNEY LEE. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1903. Pp. xxxiii, 611.)

THE word "provisional," which might be stamped across the title-page of most historical works, deserves to be stamped in particularly large type across the title-page of any biography that deals in these days with the career and character of Queen Victoria. There is, of course, no dearth of authentic material. The difficulties which present themselves to a writer like Mr. Lee are those of nearness and of loyalty. To appreciate the character of the problem we must remember that the phenomenon is unique in both political and personal history. For over sixty years the crown has steadily lost in power and steadily gained in influence. The loss of power must be ascribed to general causes, but that the advance of prestige is due to the Queen's popularity may be seen by a backward glance at the reigns of her uncles. The familiar lines which her laureate applied to her husband are equally true in their application to herself. She wore "the white flower of a blameless life, . . . In that fierce light which beats upon a throne And blackens every blot." Or, as another poet has it, she proved that "even in a palace life may be well led," thus gaining a place among that rare class of rulers which includes Marcus Aurelius, King Alfred, and St. Louis.

At the same time the Queen was very human and she lived in the age of photography. Here Mr. Lee's difficulties begin to be pressing. As an Englishman he shares in the national reverence. As a biographer trained in the severe methods of the *National Dictionary* he is bound to exalt impartiality and to shun mere adulation. The chief praise of this book is that he approached his trying task in the proper spirit. Memoir writers of the court and of St. Stephen's have gossiped about the Queen with all the volubility of the nineteenth century. Mr. Lee sifts the chit-chat with a double purpose. He is just but he is also sympathetic, paying fit consideration, he says, "to the public and to the private

interests involved. The inevitable candour of the historical biographer can never be unwelcome to those who honour the Queen's memory aright. Truth with her was an enduring passion." Accordingly Mr. Lee speaks quite frankly about certain foibles — the fondness for German relatives, the strong native prejudices and predilections which needed to be schooled, the bad taste in art, and the somewhat morbid tendency of mind which led to the accumulation of sepulchral memorials. Justice gets its due, but there is no exaggerated display of candor. Mr. Lee always remembers the Queen's fundamental honesty of character, her sympathy with her subjects, and her profound sense of public duty. "Far from being an embodiment of selfish whim, the Queen's personal sentiment blended in its main current sincere love of public justice with staunch fidelity to domestic duty, and ripe experience came in course of years to imbue it with much of the force of patriarchal wisdom, even with 'something like prophetic strain.' In her capacity alike of monarch and of woman, the Queen's personal sentiment proved, on the whole, a safer guide than the best-devised systems of moral or political philosophy."

In such a brief note it is only possible to point out the essential difficulties of Mr. Lee's problem and to comment upon the temper in which he has approached them. As regards contents, the prospective reader expects to find the political element a strong one. Indeed, the domestic life of the Queen is hardly touched upon, apart from its bearing upon public issues and public duties. The concluding chapter on her position and character is but one of forty-nine and is contained in fourteen pages. The praise which Mr. Lee merits is that of having steered a difficult course with great skill, of having won the success which is due to honesty, and of having written the best sketch of the Queen's character in relation to her reign.

CHARLES W. COLBY.

The Three Years' War. By CHRISTIAAN RUDOLF DE WET. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1902. Pp. x, 448.)

THIS work, which purports by its title to be a history of the late war between Great Britain and the South African Republic, is a simple narrative of the part taken in that war by the author. Though formally dedicated to his "fellow subjects of the British empire," it is addressed, as appears in the preface, to the general public of the civilized world.

Christiaan Rudolf de Wet was mustered into the commando of the District of Heilbron in the Orange Free State October 3, 1899, as a private burgher, and laid down his arms May 31, 1902, as general commander-in-chief of the Orange Free State armies. It would be interesting to learn the particular causes of his rapid rise; what, if any, had been his previous training and experience as a soldier; what was his political backing — for in the militia army of the Boers it must have been an important factor; what was his age and parentage; what had been his early schooling and higher general education. But, as already intimated, the work is not a biography. On these interesting questions it leaves